

**STATEMENT OF REP UDALL IN RESPONSE TO
ADM GEHMAN'S LETTER TO SEN. MIKULSKI**

I am encouraged by Admiral Gehman's letter. He underlines the risk involved in all shuttle flights, noting that "where one goes on orbit makes little difference." He writes that non-Station flights, such as flights to Hubble, may be slightly more risky – but Admiral Gehman also notes that the CAIB looked only at the risk to the shuttle from debris shedding, not at the "total risk equation for all possible Shuttle missions." For example, he pointed out that "one of the more significant factors is the heavy cargo loads that are frequently carried to the ISS at high inclinations, which creates risk factors of their own."

I am pleased that Admiral Gehman agrees with Sen. Mikulski and those of us who have cosponsored H. Res. 550 that a "deep and rich study of the entire gain/risk equation" is required to determine the best course forward in servicing the Hubble Space Telescope.

Admiral Gehman was not asked to conduct such a "deep and rich study," but I strongly believe NASA Administrator O'Keefe should ask an independent panel, such as one organized by the National Research Council, to do so. Only through such an independent review will it be possible to assess all our options for safely servicing Hubble.

I am not prepared to accept such an arbitrary cancellation of the planned servicing mission to the Hubble in the absence of such an independent review. Just yesterday, we had yet another reminder of the ways Hubble continues to rewrite the astronomy textbooks and fundamentally alter our worldview. We should do all that we can in a responsible fashion to ensure that this capability is not lost prematurely.